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ABSTRACT

This study examined program participation and academic progress of second language learners, following a cohort of Texas public school students from the school years, 1992-93 to 1999-00 as they progressed through the elementary and middle grades. Researchers examined the following: changes in Texas policy related to students with limited English proficiency (LEP) that occurred during this time; demographic characteristics of middle school students once identified as LEP and their non-LEP classmates; special language program participation patterns over time; participation in the assessment program; and progress of cohort students toward passing the grade 10 exit-level test required for graduation. By the time they reached middle school, most Texas LEP students were receiving all of their instruction in the regular, all-English instructional program. Many factors influenced the patterns of special language services students received and the number of years they received those services. There were gaps between LEP and non-LEP students in progress toward meeting the grade 10 exit-level testing requirement. Most LEP students were economically disadvantaged, and performance differences between LEP and non-LEP students reflected, in part, performance differences between students who were economically disadvantaged and students who were not. Among LEP students, there were performance differences by pattern of special language services. (Contains 19 references, 13 tables, and 3 figures.) (SM)

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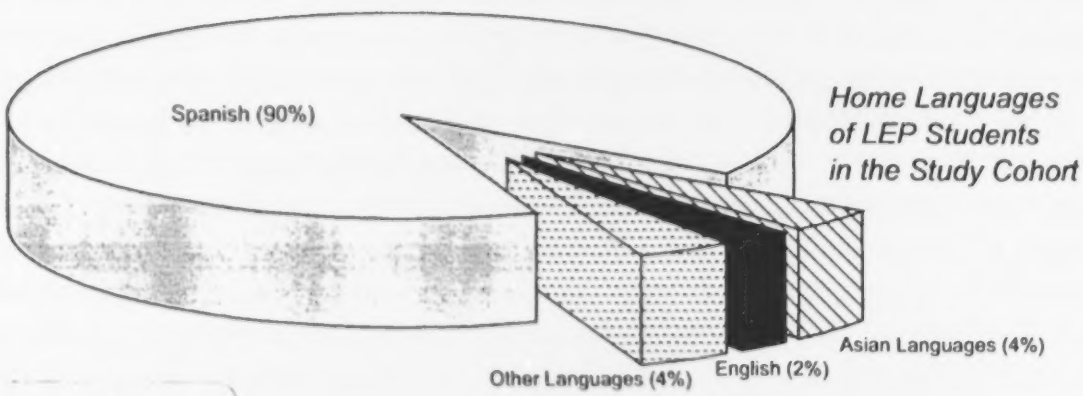
Program Participation and Academic Progress of Second Language Learners: Texas Middle School Update



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Abstract. This report has been prepared as an update to *Policy Research Report No. 10, Academic Achievement of Elementary Students With Limited English Proficiency in Texas Public Schools* (1998). The purpose of this study is to examine program participation and academic progress of second language learners over time. The study followed a cohort of Texas public school students from 1992-93 to 1999-00 as they progressed through the elementary and middle grades. An overview of Texas policy related to students with limited English proficiency (LEP) describes policy changes that took place during this time. Demographic characteristics of middle school students once identified as limited English proficient and their classmates who were not LEP were examined. Special language program participation patterns were examined from a longitudinal perspective. Participation in the assessment program and progress of students in the cohort toward passing the exit-level test required for graduation were also examined.

By the time they reach middle school, most LEP students in Texas public schools are receiving all of their instruction in the regular, all-English, instructional program. In this study, we looked back at the patterns of special language services one cohort of students received in elementary and middle school. The data suggest that many factors influence the patterns of special language services student receive and the number of years they receive those services.

In addition to looking back at the patterns of special language services students received in elementary and middle school, this study looked forward to progress of students at Grade 8 toward passing the Grade 10 exit-level test required for graduation. There were gaps between the LEP and non-LEP students in the study cohort in progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement. Most LEP students are economically disadvantaged, and performance differences between LEP and non-LEP students reflected, in part, performance differences between students who are economically disadvantaged and students who are not economically disadvantaged. Among LEP students, there were also performance differences by pattern of special language services.

Keywords. *bilingual, English as a second language, English language learners, ESL, LEP, limited English proficiency, middle school, second language learners.*

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Program Participation and Academic Progress of Second Language Learners: Texas Middle School Update

Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas
May 2002

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Program Participation and Academic Progress of Second Language Learners: Texas Middle School Update

Introduction

Each year, a record number of students with limited English proficiency (LEP) enroll in Texas public schools. The 570,453 LEP students enrolled in prekindergarten through Grade 12 in 2000-01 represented over 14 percent of the total student population. Because the number and percentage of LEP students in Texas public schools are large and increasing, Spanish versions of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests were developed for Grades 3 through 6, and the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) assessment was developed for Grades 2 through 12. As a result, all LEP students are now included in the state assessment program. Participation rates and test results for LEP students on state assessments are reported annually for students identified as having limited English proficiency at the time the tests are administered. Less is known about the long-term performance of LEP students once they are no longer identified as limited English proficient.

The purpose of this study is to examine program participation and academic progress of second language learners over time. The study followed a cohort of Texas public school students from 1992-93 to 1999-00 as they progressed through the elementary and middle grades. An overview of Texas policy related to LEP students describes policy changes that took place during this time. Demographic characteristics of middle school students once identified as having limited English proficiency and their classmates who were not identified as limited English proficient were examined. Special language program participation patterns were examined from a longitudinal perspective. Participation in the assessment program and progress of students in the cohort toward passing the exit-level test required for graduation were also examined.

Texas Policy

Texas school districts are required to offer bilingual education programs in the elementary grades if 20 or more LEP students speaking the same language are enrolled in the same grade. Bilingual education programs are designed to ensure that students master the content of the essential knowledge and skills of the state-mandated curriculum in their first language while learning English, and in English as their English-language skills progress. Students receive content-area instruction in both languages. English as a second language (ESL) programs are offered for LEP students in the secondary grades and at the elementary level when there are too few students with the same language enrolled at the same grade level to offer a bilingual education program. English as a second language programs are defined as intensive programs of instruction designed to develop student proficiency in English and in content areas using second language methods. Students receive all instruction in English. State statute [Texas Education Code (TEC) §§29.051-29.064, 2000] and commissioner of education rules [19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §§89.1201-89.1265, 2001] cover criteria for identifying LEP students, district responsibilities for providing bilingual education and ESL programs, criteria for exiting students from programs, and responsibilities of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC).

Districts that are unable to provide required bilingual education programs because there are not sufficient numbers of teachers at the schools fluent in the native languages of the students must apply to the commissioner of education for exceptions to the programs. In these situations, personnel certified to teach bilingual education are assigned to the lowest grade levels first, beginning with prekindergarten. Districts that do not have sufficient numbers of teachers certified to provide

ESL programs must apply to the commissioner for waivers of certification requirements for the teachers who will provide ESL services to LEP students.

The LPACs have primary responsibility for recommending placement of LEP students in special language programs and their exit from those programs, as well as for facilitating participation of LEP students in other special programs. The LPACs are also responsible for determining the eligibility of LEP students to participate in the statewide assessment program and whether students should be tested in English or Spanish. Criteria considered in making these determinations include level of academic achievement and of literacy and oral language proficiency in English and/or Spanish, years enrolled in school and participation in special language programs, and testing history.

In July 1997, the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Spanish Language Arts, which are to be used in bilingual Spanish instruction, and for ESL (19 TAC Chapter 128). The TEKS are the foundation of the Texas public school curriculum – they describe what students should know and be able to do at every grade. The new TEKS are more detailed and more rigorous than the Essential Elements they replaced, and they establish learning standards or expectations for students rather than material to be presented (TEA, 1997). The new TEKS were implemented by school districts at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year. A majority of the LEP students in this study received most of their bilingual education and ESL instruction under the former Essential Elements for bilingual education and ESL adopted by the SBOE in 1991 (19 TAC §§75.24-75.25, 1992).

There have been changes in the areas of assessment, test exemption policies, and inclusion of LEP students in the statewide public school accountability system between 1992-93, when the study cohort students entered Grade 1, and 1999-00, the last year of the study. Table 1 shows the TAAS tests available to the students in the study cohort and test exemption policies for LEP students as they progressed through the grades.

The TAAS testing program has been in place since the 1990-91 school year. The TAAS emphasizes the assessment of academic skills and focuses on students' higher-order thinking skills and problem solving skills (TEA, 1996). Since the 1994-95 school year, students have been tested in reading and mathematics at Grades 3 through 8, in writing at Grades 4 and 8, and in science and social studies at Grade 8. There is also an exit-level test in reading, mathematics, and writing that is first administered at Grade 10. Spanish versions of the TAAS reading, mathematics, and writing tests were developed for Grades 3 through 6. The Spanish-language tests were administered statewide beginning with the Grade 3 and 4 reading and mathematics tests in 1995-96, followed by the Grade 5 and 6 reading and mathematics tests and Grade 4 writing test in 1996-97.

The exemption policy for LEP students from 1994-95 through 1998-99 allowed students to be exempted from the English TAAS for up to three years. There were three options for LEP students during the first three years of testing – they could be administered the English TAAS, the Spanish version of the TAAS, or an alternative test approved by the state. After three years of testing, LEP students were required to take the English TAAS. In 1999-00, the exemption policy changed. For that year, the only students who could be exempted from the TAAS were immigrants who had been enrolled in United States schools for three or fewer years. All other LEP students were required to take either the English or Spanish version of the TAAS. Most of the students in the study cohort were in Grade 8 in 1999-00 and would have been taking the English TAAS for several years. For students in this cohort, the change in exemption policy only affected students who entered the Texas public school system in 1997-98 or later.

Test results for LEP students who are enrolled in the district by the end of October and take the English or Spanish TAAS are included in the Academic Excellence Indictor System (AEIS) along with those for non-LEP students. The AEIS serves as the foundation for the accountability system used by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate performance of public school districts

(Continued on page 6)

Table 1.
TAAS Testing Options and Exemption Policies for Study Cohort

School Year	Grade Progression of Study Cohort	Testing Options	Exemption Policy for LEP Students
1992-93	Grade 1	None	During this time, the TAAS testing program changed from testing in Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9 in 1991-92 to testing in Grades 3-8 in 1993-94. Under the earlier testing program, LEP students could be exempted from the English test at one grade level. During the transition to testing in Grades 3-8, students scheduled to be tested in the grade following the grade at which they were exempted could receive second exemptions from the English test. (19 TAC §101.3, 1994)
1993-94	Grade 2	None	
1994-95	Grade 3	TAAS English R, M	LEP students could be exempted from the English TAAS for up to 3 consecutive years. Exempt students were administered an alternative assessment selected from a list of state-approved tests. (19 TAC §101.3, 1995)
1995-96	Grade 4	TAAS English R, M, W TAAS Spanish R, M	LEP students could be exempted from the English TAAS for up to 3 consecutive years. Exempt students were administered either the Spanish TAAS or an alternative assessment selected from a list of state-approved tests. (19 TAC §101.3, 1996)
1996-97	Grade 5	TAAS English R, M TAAS Spanish R, M	
1997-98	Grade 6	TAAS English R, M TAAS Spanish R, M	
1998-99	Grade 7	TAAS English R, M	
1999-00	Grade 8	TAAS English R, M, W, Sc, So RPTE	LEP students who were immigrants enrolled in U.S. schools for 3 or fewer years could be exempted from the English and Spanish TAAS. All other LEP students were to take either the English or Spanish version of the TAAS. After 3 years, all LEP students were required to take the English TAAS. LEP students in Grades 3-12 were required to take the RPTE until they demonstrated English reading proficiency and were taking the English TAAS. (19 TAC §101.3, 2000)

TAAS: Texas Assessment of Academic Skills R=Reading, M=Mathematics, W=Writing, Sc=Science, So=Social Studies; RPTE: Reading Proficiency Tests in English

During the years most of the students in the study cohort were progressing from Grade 3 to Grade 7, LEP students could be exempted from the English TAAS for up to 3 years. The Spanish TAAS was introduced in 1995-96 as an option for LEP students who were exempted from the English TAAS. In 1999-00, the RPTE replaced locally selected alternative assessments for exempt LEP students.

(Continued from page 4)

and campuses through ratings, acknowledgments, rewards, sanctions, and reports. Results for LEP students are included in the base TAAS indicator used to determine district and campus ratings. The TAAS performance indicator – the percentage of students passing each test (reading, writing, and mathematics), summed across grades – is evaluated for student groups (African American, Hispanic, White, and economically disadvantaged) as well as for all students tested. Results for students tested on the Spanish TAAS in Grades 3 and 4 in reading and mathematics were included in the TAAS indicator used to rate districts and campuses for the first time in 1999. The 1999-00 test results for students tested on Spanish TAAS in Grades 3 through 6 in reading, mathematics, and writing were included in the TAAS indicator used for the 2000 ratings. By the time the TAAS indicator used to determine district and campus ratings was expanded to include Spanish TAAS results in 1999, most of the students in the study cohort were in Grade 7. Although not used for accountability ratings until 1999, Spanish TAAS results have been reported on AEIS district and campus reports since 1996-97. District and campus AEIS reports show performance on the indicators used for ratings as well as other indicators. The reports also include profile data that provide context for interpreting the performance results.

The RPTE was administered statewide for the first time in the spring of 2000. This test is designed to measure annual growth in English reading proficiency of second language learners and is used along with the English and Spanish TAAS to provide a comprehensive assessment system for LEP students. The RPTE measures three levels of proficiency – Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. Students with limited English proficiency in Grades 3-12 are required to take the RPTE until they achieve Advanced proficiency. Once they achieve a rating of Advanced they are required to take the English or Spanish TAAS in subsequent years. For LEP students who are tested on the RPTE in consecutive years, it is possible to measure growth in English proficiency. Growth on the RPTE has been reported on the AEIS reports beginning in 2000-01. There are no current plans to include the RPTE performance results in the accountability rating system.

Student Characteristics

This study begins with a cohort of all students enrolled in Grade 1 for the first time in Texas public schools in 1992-93. As the 1992-93 first graders moved through the grades, they were joined by new students transferring into the Texas public school system for the first time in Grades 2 through 8. For example, students enrolled in Texas public schools for the first time as second graders in 1993-94 were added to the cohort. In 1999-00 there were 256,098 students in the cohort who had been continuously enrolled from the time they entered the Texas public school system through 1999-00. These 256,098 continuously enrolled students are the subject of this report. The cohort includes 201,046 of the original Grade 1 students and 55,052 students who transferred into the cohort in Grades 2 through 8 over the years. Students from the cohort who left the Texas public school system before 1999-00 (66,702 students) and students with enrollment gaps (31,308 students) are not included in the analyses.

The transfer students in the study cohort differed from the original Grade 1 students in a number of ways, as shown in Table 2. The transfer students were, on average, older than the students who had been in Texas schools from Grade 1. Twenty-three percent of the transfer students were seven years old or older on September 1, 1992, compared to only 4 percent of the students from the original cohort. There were also more Asian/Pacific Islanders among the transfer students – there were almost as many Asian/Pacific Islanders among the transfers (3,007 Asian/Pacific Islanders) as there were among the original Grade 1 students (3,711 Asian/Pacific Islanders).

The transfer students who joined the cohort were more likely to have limited English proficiency and more likely to be recent immigrants than the students who entered in Grade 1. Twenty-eight percent of the transfer students were LEP students, and 15 percent were recent immigrants who had been in school in the United States for fewer than three years. However, the transfer students were less likely to be identified as economically disadvantaged or at risk of failing or dropping out of school. It should be noted that the status of the transfer students in relation to language

proficiency, immigration, socioeconomic circumstances, retention, or academic risk before they entered the Texas public school system is not known.

Students who entered at Grade 1 in 1992-93 were more likely to remain enrolled through 1999-00 than students who entered later. For example, 75 percent of the students who entered the Texas public school system at Grade 1 in 1992-93 were enrolled continuously through 1999-00 compared to only half of the students who entered at Grade 2 in 1993-94.

Table 2.
Profile of the Study Cohort

	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2-8 Transfers	Total Cohort
Age Sept. 1, 1992 *			
Under 6	<1%	8%	2%
6 years old	96%	68%	90%
7 years old	4%	20%	7%
Over 7	<1%	3%	1%
Race/Ethnicity *			
African American	14%	12%	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	5%	3%
Hispanic	37%	38%	37%
Native American	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	47%	45%	46%
Identified any year as:			
LEP	19%	28%	21%
Immigrant	3%	15%	5%
Economically Disadvantaged	62%	53%	60%
At Risk	68%	49%	64%
Migrant	4%	3%	4%
Total Students	201,046	55,052	256,098

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00.
* Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Students transferring into the 1992-93 Grade 1 cohort in later grades included many LEP students who were recent immigrants to the United States.

LEP Students

For this study, a LEP student is defined as a student who was identified as having limited English proficiency at any time after entering the Texas public school system. About one in five of the middle school students in the study (21%) were identified as having limited English proficiency at some time after entering the Texas public school system. This represents 53,401 of the 256,098 students in the study. By 1999-00, most of the LEP students in the study cohort had exited the special language programs and were no longer identified as having limited English proficiency. Throughout this report, references to LEP students or second language learners are understood to include these former LEP students, unless otherwise specified. As Table 3 on page 8 shows, the LEP students differed in a number of ways from the students who were not limited English proficient. Most LEP students were ethnic minorities, with Hispanics (92%) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (6%) making up the largest groups.

A much higher percentage of LEP students (94 percent, compared to 51 percent of non-LEP students) were identified as economically disadvantaged in at least one year between the time they entered the Texas public school system and 1999-00. Students are identified as being economically disadvantaged through eligibility for participation in programs such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. The percentages shown in Table 3 include students who were identified as economically disadvantaged in any year. Participation in the free and reduced-price lunch program is higher in elementary schools than middle schools, and the percentage of students in the study cohort still identified as economically disadvantaged in 1999-00 (83 percent for LEP students and 34 percent for non-LEP students) was smaller than the percentage ever identified as economically disadvantaged. Socioeconomic status of LEP students varied by ethnicity. Most Hispanic LEP students (97%) were identified as economically disadvantaged at least one year. By comparison, fewer than two-thirds of Asian/Pacific Islander LEP students (63%) were identified as economically disadvantaged in at least one year.

Limited English proficiency is one of the criteria for identifying elementary students as being at risk of school failure or dropping out (TEC §29.081, 2000), and 94 percent of the LEP students were

Table 3.
Profile of the Study Cohort

	Non-LEP	LEP	Total Cohort
Race/Ethnicity *			
African American	17%	1%	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	6%	3%
Hispanic	23%	92%	37%
Native American	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	58%	2%	46%
Identified any year as:			
Immigrant	1%	22%	5%
Migrant	1%	12%	4%
Economically Disadvantaged	51%	94%	60%
At Risk	56%	94%	64%
Special Education	22%	16%	20%
Gifted & Talented	19%	10%	17%
Age Sept. 1, 1992 *			
Under 6	2%	3%	2%
6 years old	91%	84%	90%
7 years old	7%	11%	7%
Over 7	<1%	2%	1%
Grade in 1999-00*			
Grade 6	<1%	1%	1%
Grade 7	11%	16%	12%
Grade 8	88%	82%	87%
Grade 9	<1%	1%	0%
Kindergarten 1991-92**	89%	89%	89%
Prekindergarten			
Attended 1990-91	20%	50%	25%
Eligible but did not attend	26%	50%	31%
Total Students	202,697	53,401	256,098

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00.

* Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

** Percentages in this category based on 37,889 LEP students and 163,157 non-LEP students in study cohort who were enrolled in Grade 1 in 1992-93.

Students in the study cohort with limited English proficiency differed from their non-LEP classmates in a number of ways.

identified as being at risk in at least one year. Fewer LEP students received special education services between 1992-93 and 1999-00 — 16 percent, compared to 22 percent of the non-LEP students. Only 10 percent of the LEP students were served in programs for gifted and talented students in at least one year, compared to 19 percent of non-LEP students. The LEP students were more likely to be identified as recent immigrants. They were also more likely to be from migrant families.

The LEP students as a group were slightly older than their non-LEP classmates – 13 percent were seven years old or older on September 1, 1992 (the year they would have started first grade), compared to 7 percent of the non-LEP students. By 1999-00, the majority of the students in the study (87%) had advanced to eighth grade. However, 17 percent of the LEP students and 11 percent of the non-LEP students were enrolled in Grade 7 or 6 that year, meaning they had been retained in grade once or twice after entering the Texas public school system.

Students with limited English proficiency and non-LEP students attended public school kindergarten the year before they entered Grade 1 at the same rates. About 89 percent of the students in the study who entered Grade 1 in Texas public schools in 1992-93 attended kindergarten programs the prior year. Half of the LEP first graders also attended public school prekindergarten programs two years earlier, compared to just 20 percent of the non-LEP students. Districts are required to offer prekindergarten programs for economically disadvantaged students and LEP students. Based on English proficiency and socioeconomic status in 1992-93, 50 percent of the LEP first graders and 26 percent of the non-LEP first graders were eligible but did not attend prekindergarten programs in 1990-91.

Spanish was the home language of 90 percent of the LEP students. Four percent of the LEP students spoke Asian languages, including Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese. English was reported on the home language survey as the language spoken in the homes of 2 percent of the LEP students. Errors in

completing the home language survey are not uncommon. Special language services are only provided to students who speak languages other than English, and 93 percent of the LEP students with English as a home language were reported as receiving special language services at some time before 1999-00. About 89 percent of the LEP students from English-speaking homes were Hispanic, and 7 percent were Asian/Pacific Islanders.

Special Language Programs

Most second language learners (92%) were identified as having limited English proficiency when they entered school and were placed in bilingual education or ESL programs immediately. The number of years a student remains in the special language program varies based on program characteristics and goals as well as student needs. Schools typically do not offer bilingual education programs at the middle school grades or above, and as shown in Table 4, few of the students in the study cohort were in bilingual education programs in 1999-00. However, about one-third (17,536 students) were still receiving ESL instruction in 1999-00. As Table 4 shows, the more recently LEP students entered the Texas public school system, the more likely they were to be in ESL programs in 1999-00. About 21 percent of the LEP students in the study cohort who entered the Texas public school system in Grade 1 in 1992-93 were still receiving ESL instruction in 1999-00. In contrast, over 75 percent of the LEP students who entered Texas public schools at Grade 6 or later were receiving instruction in bilingual education or ESL programs in 1999-00. See pages 13-14 for more information about years in special language programs for LEP students in the study cohort.

Patterns of special language program participation from 1992-93 through 1999-00 varied for the LEP students in the study. Students in the study were divided into the five groups shown in Table 5 on page 10 based on the type of special language services (bilingual education or ESL) they received from 1992-93 to 1999-00 and whether they received services continuously from the time they entered the Texas public school system. The first three groups represent a coherent

Table 4.
1999-00 Status of LEP Students in the Study Cohort

First Year and Grade in Texas School	Special Language Services in 1999-00			Total LEP Students
	Bilingual Program	ESL Program	None	
Grade 1 in 1992-93	<1%	21%	79%	37,889
Grade 2 in 1993-94	1%	27%	73%	2,209
Grade 3 in 1994-95	<1%	37%	63%	2,132
Grade 4 in 1995-96	1%	45%	54%	2,067
Grade 5 in 1996-97	1%	63%	36%	2,161
Grade 6 in 1997-98	2%	77%	22%	1,793
Grade 7 in 1998-99	2%	88%	10%	2,354
Grade 8 in 1999-00	2%	94%	4%	2,796
Total LEP Students	309	17,536	35,556	53,401

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00.

Most of the LEP students in the study cohort who did not enter the Texas public school system until middle school were still receiving special language services in 1999-00.

Table 5.
Special Language Program Participation Patterns of LEP Students in the Study Cohort

Special Language Program Pattern	Grade Entered Texas Public School System								Total LEP Students
	Grade 1 1992-93	Grade 2 1993-94	Grade 3 1994-95	Grade 4 1995-96	Grade 5 1996-97	Grade 6 1997-98	Grade 7 1998-99	Grade 8 1999-00	
Bilingual Education	34%	25%	18%	11%	6%	2%	2%	2%	14,318
Bilingual Education to ESL	24%	30%	38%	42%	50%	17%	1%	0%	13,021
ESL	14%	17%	21%	26%	27%	66%	84%	94%	12,869
Mix of Services	20%	24%	20%	18%	14%	11%	10%	0%	9,521
No Services	8%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3,672
Total LEP Students	37,889	2,209	2,132	2,067	2,161	1,793	2,354	2,796	53,401

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00.
Note. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The pattern of special language services received by LEP students differed for students entering the Texas public school system with limited English proficiency at different grade levels.

sequence of services. The fourth group represents students who received a mix of services, and the fifth group represents students who did not receive any special language services.

Students in the ***bilingual education*** sequence were placed in bilingual education programs the year they entered the Texas public school system and continued to receive bilingual education instruction until they were placed in regular, all-English, instructional programs. The most typical example of this program sequence is that of a student who was placed in a bilingual education program when he or she entered Grade 1 in 1992-93, continued to receive bilingual education services through third grade, and moved into a regular, all-English, instructional program in Grade 4 in 1995-96. However, the bilingual education sequence also includes students who received only one or two years of bilingual education instruction and students who received up to eight years of bilingual education instruction. In addition, students who entered the Texas public school system in a later grade are identified with this pattern of special language services if they were placed in bilingual education programs the first year they were enrolled.

The bilingual education sequence was the most common pattern of special language services for LEP students who were enrolled in Texas public schools from first grade in 1992-93. As Table 5 shows, the later a LEP student entered the Texas public school system, the less likely he or she was to receive this pattern of services.

It was not uncommon for students to move from ***bilingual education to ESL*** programs before moving into regular, all-English, instructional programs. The most typical example of the bilingual education to ESL sequence is that of a student who was placed in a bilingual education program when he or she entered Grade 1 in 1992-93, received bilingual education instruction through Grade 5, then moved into an ESL program when he or she moved to middle school for Grade 6 in 1996-97. However, this program sequence also includes students who received only one or two years of bilingual education instruction before moving into ESL programs and students who received as many as seven years of bilingual education instruction. The length of time students spent in ESL programs before moving into regular, all-English, instructional programs also varied. The bilingual education to ESL sequence also includes students who transferred into the Texas public school system in later grades, were placed in bilingual education programs the first year, and later moved to ESL programs.

Students who entered the Texas public school system in the elementary grades, but later than Grade 1, were most likely to follow the bilingual education to ESL pattern of services, as shown in Table 5.

Students in the ***ESL*** sequence were placed in ESL programs the year they entered the Texas public school system and continued to receive ESL instruction until they were placed in regular, all-English, instructional programs. On average, students remained in ESL programs about three years, although this category includes students who received ESL instruction only one or two years and those who received ESL instruction as many as eight years. The ESL program sequence also includes students who entered the Texas public school system in later grades and were placed in ESL programs the first year they were enrolled.

As noted earlier, Texas public schools typically do not offer bilingual education in the secondary grades. Most of the students in this study who entered Texas public schools in Grades 6 through 8 were served in an ESL sequence.

The fourth group represents students who received some other ***mix of services***. This includes students who moved from ESL programs to bilingual education programs or back and forth between bilingual education and ESL programs, students who did not receive special language services their first year in school but did later, and students who had a break in special language services but later returned to bilingual education or ESL programs.

Almost one-fourth of the 9,521 students in this group (24%) received a coherent sequence of special language services (bilingual education sequence, bilingual education to ESL sequence, or ESL sequence) beginning the year *after* they were first reported as enrolled. However, 17 percent were not enrolled in special language programs until two years after they were first reported in enrollment. Students receiving a mix of services were also much more likely to have changed school districts over the study period. Campus-to-campus mobility within a district could also result in students receiving a mix of services.

Almost 7 percent of the 53,401 LEP students in the study cohort received ***no services*** in special language programs. Although school districts are required to offer bilingual education or ESL programs for LEP students, parental approval is required to place students in those programs. The parent denial rate for a district is one of five factors used to identify districts for bilingual education monitoring visits. About 22 percent of the 3,672 students who received no special language services were served in special education programs at some time. The individual education plans (IEPs) for these students may have included special language services that were provided through the special education programs.

Special Language Program Patterns

The LEP students in this study were grouped based on the type of special language services (bilingual education or ESL) they received from the time they entered the Texas public school system and whether they received services continuously from their first year in a Texas public school.

Bilingual Education Sequence: Students who were placed in bilingual education programs the year they entered the Texas public school system and continued to receive bilingual education instruction until they were placed in regular, all-English, instructional programs.

Bilingual Education to ESL Sequence: Students who were placed in bilingual education programs the year they entered the Texas public school system, but moved from bilingual education programs to ESL programs before moving into regular, all-English, instructional programs.

ESL Sequence: Students who were placed in ESL programs the year they entered the Texas public school system and continued to receive ESL instruction until they were placed in regular, all-English, instructional programs.

Mix of Services: Students who received some other mix of special language services or had a break in services.

No Services: Students who did not receive any special language services.

The sequence of special language services students received varied by home language of the students. Spanish is not only the home language of most LEP students in Texas, but also the language in which most bilingual education teachers are certified. Consequently, Spanish-speaking students in the study cohort were most likely to be in bilingual education (31%) or bilingual education to ESL (28%) sequences. Few bilingual education teachers in Texas are certified in languages other than Spanish. Often, there also are too few LEP students with languages other than Spanish at the same grade level who speak the same language to serve in bilingual education programs. The LEP students in the study cohort speaking languages other than Spanish were served predominantly in ESL sequences (73%).

Students with limited English proficiency for whom English was reported as the home language were more likely to receive a mix of services (55%) or no services (17%). The mix of services sequence includes students who did not receive special language services their first year in school but did later. This is consistent with the speculation that the home language may have been incorrectly reported as English on the home language survey when the student entered school.

TAAS Participation

As noted earlier, the exemption policy for LEP students in effect from 1994-95 through 1998-99 allowed students to be exempted from the English TAAS for up to three years. As Table 6 shows, many LEP students in the study cohort were tested in English the first year the TAAS was available to them. About 43 percent of the students who entered Grade 1 in 1992-93 were first tested in English at Grade 3, over half were tested in English by Grade 4, and almost three-fourths were tested in English by Grade 5. By 1999-00, LEP students who entered the Texas public school system by Grade 5 were being tested at rates comparable to non-LEP students. In 1999-00, the only students in the study who could receive LPAC exemptions from the TAAS were immigrants who had been enrolled in United States schools for three or fewer years. The later in middle school LEP students entered school in Texas, the more likely they were to be exempted from the TAAS in 1999-00.

Table 6.
English TAAS Participation of LEP Students in the Study Cohort

First Year and Grade in Texas School	Percent of LEP Students Tested in English											
	TAAS Reading						TAAS Mathematics					
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Grade 1 in 1992-93	43%	58%	73%	90%	93%	94%	43%	59%	74%	91%	94%	95%
Grade 2 in 1993-94	19%	35%	56%	85%	91%	93%	19%	36%	57%	86%	92%	94%
Grade 3 in 1994-95	10%	22%	42%	82%	90%	93%	11%	22%	43%	83%	91%	94%
Grade 4 in 1995-96	–	10%	24%	55%	85%	93%	–	10%	25%	56%	86%	94%
Grade 5 in 1996-97	–	–	10%	29%	60%	91%	–	–	11%	30%	60%	91%
Grade 6 in 1997-98	–	–	–	14%	33%	65%	–	–	–	15%	34%	66%
Grade 7 in 1998-99	–	–	–	–	14%	30%	–	–	–	–	14%	31%
Grade 8 in 1999-00	–	–	–	–	–	13%	–	–	–	–	–	14%

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00; Texas Assessment of Academic Skills 1993-94–1999-00.

Many LEP students who entered Texas public schools in Grade 1 in 1992-93 began taking the English TAAS in Grade 3.

Years in Special Language Programs

The number of years in special language programs was examined for the 37,889 L''EP students in the study cohort who were enrolled in Texas public schools since Grade 1 in 1992-93. These students had been enrolled in Texas public schools continuously from 1992-93 through 1999-00. As noted earlier, in 1999-00, most (79%) had exited the special language programs and were receiving all instruction in the regular, all-English, instructional program.

As Table 7 shows, the LEP students in the study cohort who had been enrolled in Texas public schools since Grade 1 in 1992-93 spent between 4 and 5 years in special language programs between 1992-93 and 1999-00, or 4.3 years on average. Students in bilingual education sequences and ESL sequences received special language services for about the same number of years – 3.6 years for bilingual education and 3.8 years for ESL. Students receiving a mix of services stayed in the special language programs longer – 4.5 years on average.

Students in bilingual education to ESL sequences remained in special language programs the longest – 6.9 years. These students received an average of 4.5 years of bilingual education instruction followed by an average of 2.4 years of ESL instruction. A number of factors may contribute to the length of time these students continued receiving special language services. First, students in the bilingual education to ESL sequence were slightly less likely to have attended public school kindergarten and less likely to have attended prekindergarten than students who followed a bilingual education sequence. Consequently, students in the bilingual education to ESL sequence, on average, had fewer years of bilingual education instruction before entering Grade 1 than students in the bilingual education sequence.

Second, some students in bilingual education to ESL sequences have special learning needs. Students in bilingual education to ESL sequences were more likely to have received special education services during their eight years in the Texas public school system – 22 percent received special education services at some time, compared to 14 percent of the students in bilingual education sequences. Criteria for exiting students from bilingual education and ESL programs contained in commissioner of education rules (19 TAC §89.1225) require students to meet academic performance standards. Some students with learning disabilities may have difficulty meeting these performance standards for reasons unrelated to English proficiency. Conversely, the students in the bilingual education to ESL sequence

Table 7.
Years in Special Language Programs for LEP Students in the Study Cohort Students Enrolled Since 1992-93

Special Language Program Pattern	Total LEP Students	Years in Bilingual Education Program	Years in ESL Program	Total Years in Special Language Programs
Bilingual Education	12,865	3.6	0	3.6
Bilingual Education to ESL	9,273	4.5	2.4	6.9
ESL	5,172	0	3.8	3.8
Mix of Services	7,462	2.2	2.2	4.5
No Services	3,117	0	0	0
All Programs	37,889	2.8	1.6	4.3

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00.

Years in Special Language Programs (cont.)

were less likely than students in the bilingual education sequence to have been identified as gifted – 8 percent, compared to 16 percent for students in the bilingual education sequence. Students in the bilingual education to ESL sequence were also slightly more likely to be recent immigrants – 15 percent, compared to 12 percent of students in the bilingual education sequence. Retention rates also suggest some of these students were not making sufficient academic progress. Over one-fourth (26%) of the students in bilingual education to ESL sequences were retained in grade at least once between 1992-93 and 1999-00, compared to 14 percent of the students in bilingual education sequences.

Geography may also be a factor in the types of special language services students received. Regional differences may be related to demographic characteristics of the student population as a whole, as well as characteristics of the LEP students. Bilingual education has been identified as a teacher shortage area in Texas for a number of years and teacher shortages may also vary by region. Districts that apply for exceptions because they are not able to provide bilingual education programs at all grade levels are directed to assign certified bilingual education teachers to the lowest grade levels first, beginning with prekindergarten. This practice can result in students moving from bilingual education programs in the early elementary grades to ESL programs in later grades. Regional differences in the types of special language services students received are discussed in more detail on pages 22-24. Even within regions, districts with similar student populations varied in the types of special language services LEP students received. District policies on special language services were undoubtedly another factor in the number of years students in the study cohort remained in special language programs.

The 1999-00 status of the LEP students also varied by the type of special language services they had received since entering Texas public schools, as shown in Table 8. Students served in bilingual education sequences were least likely to be still receiving special language services in 1999-00 – only 1 percent were still in bilingual education programs. Most of the students in ESL sequences (89%) were also no longer receiving special language services. A greater percentage of students in bilingual education to ESL sequences and students receiving a mix of services were still receiving special language services in 1999-00.

Table 8.
1999-00 Status of LEP Students in the Study Cohort
Students Enrolled Since 1992-93

Special Language Program Pattern	Special Language Services in 1999-00: Bilingual Program	ESL Program	None	Total LEP Students
Bilingual Education	1%	0%	99%	12,865
Bilingual Education to ESL	0%	51%	49%	9,273
ESL	0%	11%	89%	5,172
Mix of Services	1%	34%	65%	7,462
No Services	0%	0%	100%	3,117
All Programs	<1%	21%	79%	37,889

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00.

Progress Toward Graduation

In addition to the importance of the TAAS as one of the base indicators in the accountability system used to determine district and campus performance ratings, the exit-level TAAS also has special significance for students because passing the exit-level test is a requirement for graduation. There is no way to predict with certainty which students will pass the exit-level test; however, test performance in the earlier grades gives an indication of whether a student is making sufficient progress toward that goal. The Texas Learning Index (TLI) was developed to relate student performance on the TAAS reading and mathematics tests to a passing standard and to compare student performance across grades. A TLI score of 70 corresponds to the passing standard at each grade level. Within a subject, TLI scores can be compared to determine growth from one year to the next. A TLI growth of zero means that one year of growth has occurred. A negative value means that less than one year of growth has occurred, and a positive value means that more than one year of growth has occurred. The TLI score and TLI growth provide two indicators of whether a student is making sufficient yearly progress to be reasonably assured of meeting minimum expectations on the exit-level test. For example, a student who achieves a TLI score of 70 or above at Grade 8 would be expected to succeed on the exit-level test if the student continues to meet or exceed expectations for academic growth.

For this cohort, measuring student progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement is complicated by the introduction of a new testing program in 2002-03. The current exit-level test has reading, mathematics, and writing components and is first administered at Grade 10. If they continue to advance one grade level each year, most of the students in the study cohort will take the exit-level TAAS in 2001-02 as part of the last class to which it is administered.

Students who had not advanced to Grade 9 by January 1, 2001, will be required to pass the new Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exit-level test, which will replace the TAAS in 2002-03. The TAKS will be closely aligned with the new TEKS curriculum standards, which were implemented by school districts at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year. The TAKS will cover more subjects and be more rigorous than the TAAS. The TAKS exit-level test will be administered at Grade 11 rather than Grade 10 and will include English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies components. The test will require knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Physics and Chemistry, English III, early American and United States history, world geography, and world history. Consequently, students in the study cohort who were retained in grade before they reached Grade 9 will have to meet a graduation requirement that incorporates the higher expectations of the TAKS.

To assist districts in planning for the new tests, the 2000-01 Grade 8 TAAS results for the entire state were analyzed using a higher passing standard as an early indicator of the increased level of performance that may be required to be successful on the new assessments. About 6 percent of the students tested passed the 2000-01 Grade 8 TAAS reading test but did not meet the higher standard; one-fourth (24%) passed the mathematics test but did not meet the higher standard. This analysis suggests that some of the retained students in the study who passed the Grade 7 and Grade 6 TAAS in 1999-00 may have difficulty passing the more difficult TAKS in later years. They may have to make more than one year of academic progress each year to reach the higher standard by Grade 11. Those retained students failing the Grade 7 or Grade 6 test may have even greater difficulty meeting the higher standard.

A student who fails one or more parts of the exit-level TAAS the first time it is taken does have multiple opportunities to take that part again before graduation. The exit-level TAAS is given in the spring, summer, and fall of each school year. The cumulative pass rate on the exit-level test – the percentage of students who first failed the exit-level TAAS but eventually passed all parts – is high. Students will also have multiple opportunities to pass the exit-level TAKS. Because of the Student Success Initiative, students will also have multiple opportunities within the same school year to pass the third-grade reading test beginning in 2002-03, the fifth-grade reading and mathematics tests beginning in 2004-05, and the eighth-grade reading and mathematics tests beginning in 2007-08.

Under the Student Success Initiative, students who do not pass the TAKS tests at these grade levels will be subject to retention.

As Table 9 shows, the retained students in the study cohort will have more years to make the necessary gains and take additional tests on which their progress will be evaluated before they take the exit-level test. Students in Grade 9 in 1999-00 and students in Grade 8 in 1999-00 who were promoted to Grade 9 by January 1, 2001, must pass the exit-level TAAS as a graduation requirement. From 1994-95 through 1998-99 (the latest year for which data are available), only about 2 percent of students statewide were retained in Grade 8. For this cohort, those eighth graders who are retained and are still classified as eighth graders on January 1, 2001, must pass the exit-level TAKS as a graduation requirement, as do the students who were retained before Grade 8.

Table 9.
Transition from TAAS to TAKS for Students in the Study Cohort

	Grade in 1999-00			
	Grade 9	**Grade 8**	**Grade 7**	**Grade 6**
2000-01	Grade 10 Exit-level TAAS		Grade 8 TAAS	Grade 7 TAAS
2001-02		Grade 10 Exit-level TAAS		Grade 8 TAAS
2002-03	*Expected Graduation*		Grade 10 TAKS	Grade 9 TAKS
2003-04		*Expected Graduation*	Grade 11 Exit-level TAKS	Grade 10 TAKS
2004-05			*Expected Graduation*	Grade 11 Exit-level TAKS
2005-06				*Expected Graduation*
Students in Study Cohort	855	222,911	30,899	1,433

Most of the students in the study cohort were in Grade 8 in 1999-00. If they are promoted to Grade 9 by January 1, 2001, they will be part of the last class required to pass the exit-level TAAS as a graduation requirement. Students who are not in Grade 9 by January 1, 2001, must pass the new exit-level TAKS to graduate.

Table 10 on page 17 and Table 11 on page 18 show the progress of the students in the study as of 1999-00 toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement for the reading and mathematics tests. In 1999-00, most of the students in the study cohort were in Grade 8. However, about 13 percent had been retained in grade and were in Grade 6 or 7 in 1999-00. Also, a few students in the study cohort had been promoted ahead of the class and were in Grade 9 in 1999-00. Tables 10 and 11 show 1999-00 TAAS results or exemption status for all students in the study cohort. The percentages shown in Tables 10 and 11 are based on the total number of LEP or non-LEP students in the study cohort, rather than the number taking each test.

Pass. The majority of students in the study took and passed the Grade 8 TAAS in 1999-00. If they also continue to make the expected amount of academic progress, they should be able to pass the exit-level TAAS in 2001-02. Many of the retained students in the study cohort took the Grade 7 or Grade 6 TAAS in 1999-00. Retained students who pass the TAAS and demonstrate positive TLI growth are also making progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement, although they will probably not graduate in 2003-04 with the majority of students in the cohort.

For both reading and mathematics, average TLI growth was positive for LEP and non-LEP students who passed the 1999-00 TAAS at Grades 8, 7, and 6. In other words, on average, students in the study cohort who passed the 1999-00 TAAS demonstrated greater than one year's worth of academic growth. Students who passed the Grade 8 TAAS can be expected to be promoted with their class and pass the Grade 10 exit-level test in 2001-02 if they continue to make the expected amount of academic progress. As noted earlier, the students in this cohort who were not promoted to Grade 9 by January 1, 2001, will be required to take the more difficult exit-level TAKS test in Grade 11.

There are no test results for the students who were in Grade 9 in 1999-00. However, the fact that they were promoted ahead of the cohort suggests higher than average academic progress and performance. For that reason, on Tables 10 and 11, they are included in the totals of students who passed the TAAS in 1999-00.

Fail. Students who failed the Grade 8 TAAS may have difficulty passing the exit-level test. They will need to make more than one year of academic progress each year to reach passing level by Grade 10. The LEP students who failed the Grade 8 reading and mathematics tests did make more than one year of growth from the prior year, although the average growth on the reading test was only very slightly above the expected one year of growth. Although the LEP students failed the TAAS at higher rates, larger numbers of non-LEP students failed. Also, the non-LEP students who failed the Grade 8 reading and mathematics tests showed negative TLI growth, meaning they

Table 10.
Progress of the Study Cohort Toward Passing the Exit-Level Test
1999-00 TAAS Reading

1999-00 TAAS Results or Exemption Status	LEP			Non-LEP		
	Average** TLI Growth from 1998-99	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Average** TLI Growth from 1998-99	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Pass - *TAAS TLI 70 or above*						
Grade 9 (no TAAS)	—	393	1%	—	449	<1%
Grade 8	+9.0	28,905	54%	+8.7	149,918	74%
Grade 7	+5.6	3,160	6%	+5.4	10,675	5%
Grade 6	+12.8	97	<1%	+7.7	334	<1%
TOTAL PASS	—	—	**61%**	—	—	**80%**
Fail - *TAAS TLI Below 70*						
Grade 8	+0.1	6,235	12%	-3.1	10,396	5%
Grade 7	-4.2	2,795	5%	-5.9	4,831	2%
Grade 6	-2.7	170	<1%	+0.5	200	<1%
TOTAL FAIL	—	—	**17%**	—	—	**8%**
LPAC - *TAAS exempt all grades*						
RPTE Advanced	—	1,811	3%			
RPTE Intermediate	—	714	1%			
RPTE Beginning	—	1,002	2%			
RPTE Unknown*	—	216	<1%			
TOTAL LPAC	—	—	**7%**			
Other						
ARD Exemption	—	4,451	8%	—	14,313	7%
Other	—	1,460	3%	—	4,973	2%
Unknown*	—	1,992	4%	—	6,608	3%
TOTAL OTHER	—	—	**15%**	—	—	**13%**
TOTAL COHORT		**53,401**	**100%**		**202,697**	**100%**

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00; Texas Assessment of Academic Skills 1998-99 and 1999-00; Reading Proficiency Tests in English 1999-00.

* Unknown: Student was no longer enrolled on testing date or test record could not be matched to PEIMS record due to errors in student identifying information.

** TLI growth is calculated for students tested in 1999-00 who took the test for the previous grade in 1998-99. Students receiving the minimum possible score in either year and students scoring 85 or higher in 1998-99 are excluded from the calculation. Matched records for 23,965 LEP students and 55,413 non-LEP students are the basis of the calculations.

Students in the study cohort who failed the 1999-00 TAAS reading test or were exempted from the test that year by the LPAC may have difficulty passing the exit-level test.

averaged less than one year of growth from the prior year. In fact, almost one-third of the non-LEP students in the study cohort who failed the Grade 8 reading and mathematics tests had passed the Grade 7 tests. By comparison, 18 percent of the LEP students who failed the Grade 8 mathematics test had passed the Grade 7 mathematics test. Only 4 percent of the LEP students who failed the Grade 8 reading test had passed the Grade 7 reading test. Students with TLI scores below 60 in particular will need to achieve at an accelerated rate to pass the exit-level test. They may also be at greater risk of being retained in grade.

Students in the study cohort who failed the Grade 7 or Grade 6 TAAS in 1999-00 are of particular concern. These students have already been retained in grade, and with the exception of the non-LEP Grade 6 TAAS reading failers, they showed negative TLI gains from 1998-99. Not only are these students below grade level in relation to the majority of students in the cohort, they also failed

Table 11.
Progress of the Study Cohort Toward Passing the Exit-Level Test
1999-00 TAAS Mathematics

1999-00 TAAS Results or Exemption Status	LEP			Non-LEP		
	Average** TLI Growth from 1998-99	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Average** TLI Growth from 1998-99	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Pass - *TAAS TLI 70 or above*						
Grade 9 (no TAAS)	—	393	1%	—	449	<1%
Grade 8	+4.3	30,718	58%	+3.6	150,112	74%
Grade 7	+4.5	4,186	8%	+3.7	11,735	6%
Grade 6	+2.6	138	<1%	+4.6	330	<1%
TOTAL PASS	—	—	**66%**	—	—	**80%**
Fail - *TAAS TLI Below 70*						
Grade 8	+2.2	4,795	9%	-1.1	10,357	5%
Grade 7	-2.2	1,975	4%	-3.9	4,058	2%
Grade 6	-3.1	137	<1%	-2.9	214	<1%
TOTAL FAIL	—	—	**13%**	—	—	**7%**
LPAC - *TAAS exempt all grades*						
RPTE Advanced	—	1,801	3%			
RPTE Intermediate	—	703	1%			
RPTE Beginning	—	960	2%			
RPTE Unknown*	—	215	<1%			
TOTAL LPAC	—	—	**7%**			
Other						
ARD Exemption	—	4,143	8%	—	14,135	7%
Other	—	1,245	2%	—	4,699	2%
Unknown*	—	1,992	4%	—	6,608	3%
TOTAL OTHER	—	—	**14%**	—	—	**13%**
TOTAL COHORT		**53,401**	**100%**		**202,697**	**100%**

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00; Texas Assessment of Academic Skills 1998-99 and 1999-00; Reading Proficiency Tests in English 1999-00.

* Unknown: Student was no longer enrolled on testing date or test record could not be matched to PEIMS record due to errors in student identifying information.

** TLI growth is calculated for students tested in 1999-00 who took the test for the previous grade in 1998-99. Students receiving the minimum possible score in either year and students scoring 85 or higher in 1998-99 are excluded from the calculation. Matched records for 22,674 LEP students and 70,580 non-LEP students are the basis of the calculations.

Students in the study cohort who entered school with limited English proficiency were making slightly better progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement in mathematics than in reading.

the TAAS test for the lower grade and, on average, experienced less than one year of academic growth from the prior year.

LPAC. The students who received Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) exemptions from the TAAS in 1999-00 represent 7 percent of the LEP students in the study cohort. These students are recent immigrants who have been enrolled in United States schools for three or fewer years. They entered the Texas public school system in middle school. Students who are exempted from the TAAS by the LPAC are required to take the RPTE. As Tables 10 and 11 show, almost half of the LPAC exempt students (1,811 students) scored at the Advanced level on the RPTE in 1999-00. State policy regarding test exemptions does not allow exemption from the exit-level test for students with limited English proficiency. Therefore, these LPAC exempt students will be required to take the exit-level test regardless of their proficiency level on the RPTE. Most of them were in Grade 8 in 1999-00 and will be required to take the exit-level TAAS in 2001-02 if they continue to be promoted one grade level each year.

Other. For 15 percent of the LEP students and 13 percent of the non-LEP students, no 1999-00 TAAS performance data exist. These include students in special education programs who were exempted from the 1999-00 TAAS by their Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committees. Graduation requirements for students in special education programs are outlined in their individual education plans (IEPs) and may not include passing the exit-level test. Other circumstances, such as absence on the day of testing or illness during testing, can result in students' answer documents not being scored in one year. In addition, test records could not be matched to the student record for some students in the cohort. Academic progress cannot be determined for students with ARD exemptions, those whose tests were not scored in 1999-00, or those for whom test records were not found.

Based on analysis of 1999-00 TAAS Grades 8, 7, and 6 reading and mathematics participation and performance, there are gaps between the LEP and non-LEP students in the study cohort in progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement. Eighty percent of the non-LEP students passed the TAAS reading test in 1999-00 or had been promoted to Grade 9, compared to only 61 percent of the students who had been identified as having limited English proficiency at some time after entering the Texas public school system. The gap between LEP and non-LEP students is only slightly smaller in mathematics – 80 percent of the non-LEP students are making sufficient progress in mathematics, compared to 66 percent of the LEP students.

The LEP students in the study cohort failed the 1999-00 TAAS reading and mathematics tests at about twice the rate of the non-LEP students. Among the LEP students who may have difficulty passing the exit-level test are students exempted by the LPAC from taking the English TAAS in 1999-00. For most of the students in the study cohort who received LPAC exemptions in 1999-00, the exit-level TAAS will be their first TAAS test, if they are promoted as expected. Even those who scored at the Advanced level on the RPTE in 1999-00 may have difficulty passing the exit-level TAAS the first time they take the test.

Gaps between LEP and non-LEP students in progress toward meeting the exit-level test requirement reflect in part the performance gaps between economically disadvantaged students and students who are not economically disadvantaged. For this analysis, students in the study cohort were included in the economically disadvantaged group if they were identified as economically disadvantaged in any year. As Table 12 on page 20 shows, the gap between LEP and non-LEP students in progress toward passing the exit-level test was substantially smaller for economically disadvantaged students, which includes most LEP students, than for students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Among non-LEP students, there was a large performance gap between economically disadvantaged students and students who are not economically disadvantaged. Only 70 percent of the non-LEP students in the study cohort who are economically disadvantaged passed the TAAS reading test in 1999-00 or had been promoted to Grade 9, compared to 90 percent for those who are not economically disadvantaged. Among LEP students, the gap in progress toward meeting the

exit-level test requirement between economically disadvantaged students and those who are not economically disadvantaged was much smaller.

Among the economically disadvantaged students, 61 percent of the LEP students passed the TAAS reading test in 1999-00 or had been promoted to Grade 9, compared to 70 percent of the non-LEP students – a difference of only 9 percentage points, compared to 19 percentage points for all LEP and non-LEP students. There was also a smaller gap in percentage failing the reading test – 18 percent for LEP students, compared to 12 percent for non-LEP students. However, another 6 percent of the LEP students had LPAC exemptions. The gap was even smaller in mathematics. There was only a 5 percentage point difference between LEP and non-LEP students who passed the 1999-00 TAAS mathematics test or were promoted to Grade 9, and a 2 percentage point difference in TAAS failure rates.

The LEP students in the study cohort who followed a bilingual education sequence were making progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirements at rates comparable to the non-LEP students. As Table 13 shows, 80 percent of the students in this program sequence passed the

Table 12.
Progress of Students in the Study Cohort Toward Passing the Exit-Level Test
1999-00 TAAS Reading and Mathematics

Socioeconomic Status	Reading				Mathematics				Group Total
	Pass	Fail	LPAC Exempt	Other	Pass	Fail	LPAC Exempt	Other	
Economically Disadvantaged									
LEP	61%	18%	6%	15%	66%	13%	6%	14%	50,253
Non-LEP	70%	12%	0%	18%	71%	11%	0%	18%	104,254
Not Economically Disadvantaged									
LEP	66%	6%	16%	11%	69%	5%	16%	11%	3,148
Non-LEP	90%	3%	0%	7%	90%	3%	0%	7%	98,443

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00; Texas Assessment of Academic Skills 1999-00.

Most LEP students are economically disadvantaged. Performance gaps between LEP students and non-LEP students reflect, in part, the performance gaps between economically disadvantaged students and students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Table 13.
Progress of LEP Students in the Study Cohort Toward Passing the Exit-Level Test
1999-00 TAAS Reading and Mathematics

Special Language Program Pattern	Reading				Mathematics				Group Total
	Pass	Fail	LPAC Exempt	Other	Pass	Fail	LPAC Exempt	Other	
Bilingual Education	80%	10%	1%	10%	82%	8%	1%	9%	14,318
Bilingual Education to ESL	53%	29%	1%	17%	62%	21%	1%	16%	13,021
ESL	48%	12%	25%	15%	53%	8%	25%	14%	12,869
Mix of Services	57%	22%	2%	19%	64%	17%	2%	17%	9,521
No Services	74%	10%	1%	15%	76%	8%	1%	14%	3,672

Source. Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System 1990-91–1999-00; Texas Assessment of Academic Skills 1999-00.

The LEP students in the study cohort who followed a bilingual education sequence of special language services were progressing toward the exit-level test requirement at rates similar to non-LEP students.

TAAS reading test, and 82 percent passed the TAAS mathematics test in 1999-00. Most (99%) of the students in the bilingual education sequence had exited the special language programs by 1999-00. Many of the students in the bilingual education to ESL sequence were still receiving special language services in 1999-00, and this was reflected in the lower passing rates on the English-language TAAS. The ESL sequence includes most of the LEP students who entered the Texas public school system in Grade 6 or above, many of whom were recent immigrants exempted from the Grade 8 TAAS by the LPAC. Students who received a mix of special language services had lower TAAS passing rates in 1999-00 than students in the bilingual education sequence.

Summary and Conclusions

Special Language Program Patterns

By the time they reach middle school, most LEP students in Texas public schools are receiving all of their instruction in the regular, all-English, instructional program. In this study we look back at the patterns of special language services one cohort of students received in elementary and middle school. The cohort consists of students who entered first grade for the first time in 1992-93 or transferred into the Texas public school system on grade level as the cohort progressed through the grades. Five patterns of special language services are identified: bilingual education, bilingual education to ESL, ESL, mix of services, and no services. Information on the number of years students remain in special language programs is provided as part of the description of those programs. Years of special language services students receive is not a measure of either student performance or program effectiveness. The data suggest that many factors influence the patterns of special language services students receive and the number of years they receive those services.

Entry into the Texas public school system. Students who were in the Texas public school system from Grade 1 received different patterns of special language services from students who entered in later elementary grades and from students who entered in middle school. Also, most of the LEP students enrolled in Grade 1 in 1992-93 attended kindergarten the prior year, but only half attended prekindergarten two years earlier. Consequently, the number of years of special language instruction before entering first grade varied for those students in Texas public schools since Grade 1.

Home language. The sequence of special language services students received varied by home language of the students. Spanish is not only the home language of most LEP students in Texas, but also the language in which most bilingual education teachers are certified. Therefore, Spanish-speaking LEP students were much more likely than students speaking other languages to receive some instruction in a bilingual education program.

Student mobility. Mobile students – those who changed school districts – were less likely to have received a coherent sequence of special language services than students who were enrolled in the same district from the time they entered Grade 1 in 1992-93 through 1999-00. Campus-to-campus mobility within a district could also result in students receiving a mix of services.

Recent immigrants. Students who were recent immigrants to the United States remained in special language programs longer, often into middle school. Because middle schools typically do not offer bilingual education programs, these students more often received a bilingual education to ESL sequence of special language services.

Special education. LEP students with disabilities may have difficulty not only in developing proficiency in a second language, but also in achieving the academic performance standards required to exit from the special language programs. Students who received special education services in addition to special language services were more likely to receive a mix of special language services and to remain in the special language programs longer.

Student academic performance. On average, students who were retained in grade after entering the Texas public school system remained in special language programs longer, as might be expected.

(Continued on page 25)

Education Service Center Regions

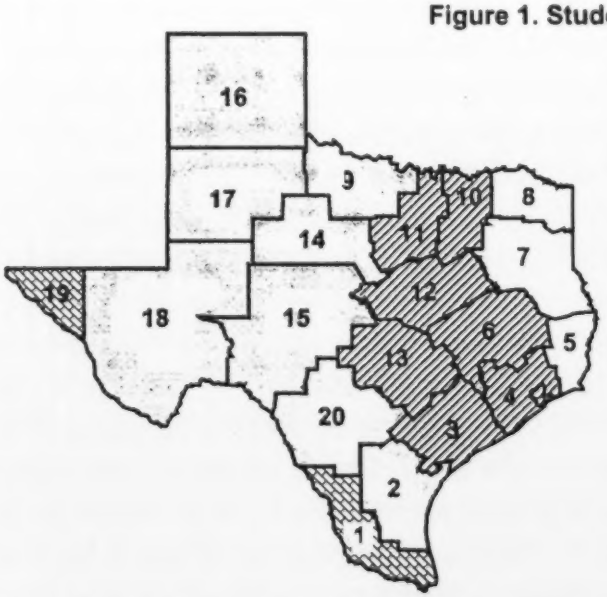
Texas is divided into 20 geographic regions, each of which is served by an education service center. Districts vary by region in ethnic diversity of the students, percentage of students with limited English proficiency, and home languages of the LEP students. These differences are factors in the types of special language services LEP students receive.

District analysis in a longitudinal study is complicated by student mobility. The following analysis is based on those students in the study cohort who were enrolled in the same district from 1992-93 through 1999-2000. There were 139,461 students from the study cohort who were enrolled in the same district continuously from the time they entered Grade 1 in 1992-93 through 1999-2000, including 28,501 LEP students. This represents 54 percent of the total students in the study cohort and 53 percent of the LEP students.

Figure 1 illustrates the ethnic diversity of the total student population in 1992-93, the year the students in the study cohort entered first grade. Hispanic students made up more than 80 percent of the student populations in the border regions of Edinburg and El Paso. Eight regions, extending from the Corpus Christi region on the gulf coast to the Amarillo region in the Texas Panhandle, had student populations that consisted predominantly of Hispanic and White students. Hispanic students made up over 40 percent of the students in five of these regions. The three regions that make up the eastern border of the state had student populations that were predominantly White and African American. The remaining seven regions had student populations that more closely mirrored the state as a whole. All three of the largest ethnic groups in the state – African American,

(Continued on page 24)

Figure 1. Student Diversity



Hispanic

Hispanic/White

African American/Hispanic/White

African American/White

Hispanic: Hispanics make up at least 80% of students; African Americans 3% or less.

Hispanic/White: Hispanics make up 12%-70% of students; African Americans 8% or less.

African American/Hispanic/White: African Americans and Hispanics each make up at least 10% of students; Whites make up 45%-70%.

African American/White: African Americans make up 20%-30% of students; Hispanics less than 8%.

Source. Texas Education Agency *Snapshot '93: 1992-93 School District Profiles.*

Note. This scale was developed from a review of the ethnic distribution of students enrolled in 1992-93.

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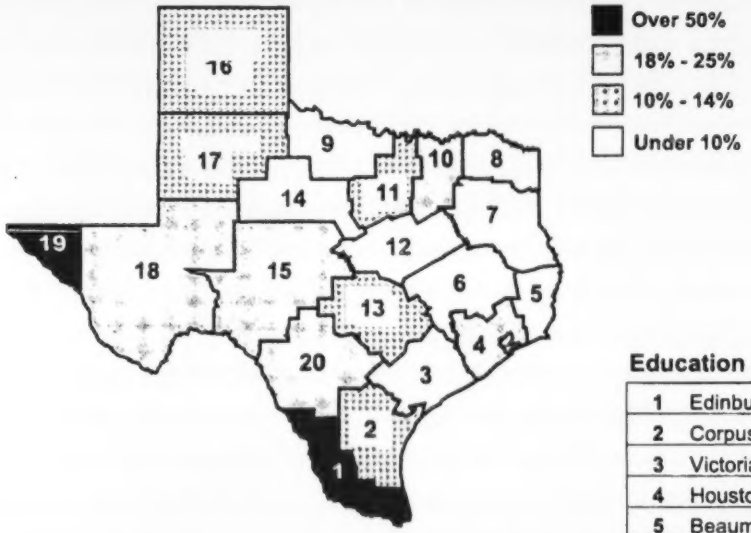
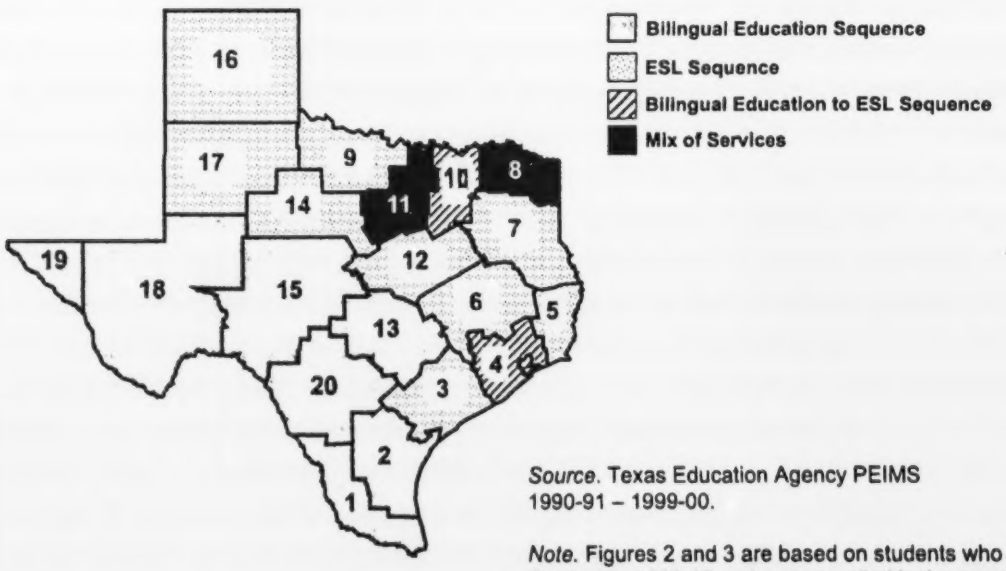
Figure 2. Distribution of LEP Students



Education Service Center Regions

1	Edinburg	11	Fort Worth
2	Corpus Christi	12	Waco
3	Victoria	13	Austin
4	Houston	14	Abilene
5	Beaumont	15	San Angelo
6	Huntsville	16	Amarillo
7	Kilgore	17	Lubbock
8	Mt. Pleasant	18	Midland
9	Wichita Falls	19	El Paso
10	Richardson	20	San Antonio

Figure 3. Most Common Pattern of Special Language Services



Source. Texas Education Agency PEIMS 1990-91 – 1999-00.

Note. Figures 2 and 3 are based on students who began Grade 1 in 1992-93 and were enrolled in the same district through 1999-00.

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Education Service Center Regions (cont.)

(Continued from page 22)

Hispanic, and White – were represented in these seven regions. The fact that Texas shares a border with Mexico is a major factor in the geographic patterns of ethnic diversity of Texas students. As Figure 2 on page 23 shows, it is also a factor in the distribution of LEP students in Texas, the majority of whom speak Spanish. The two border regions in which over 80 percent of all students were Hispanic also had the largest concentrations of LEP students – over half of the students entering first grade in the Edinburg and El Paso regions in 1992-93 were limited English proficient. Over 90 percent of the LEP students in these two regions spoke Spanish. No other region had close to this concentration of LEP students. There were five regions in which LEP students made up 18 percent to 25 percent of the 1992-93 entering first graders. These include the other three regions that share a border with Mexico and the major urban regions of Houston and Richardson/Dallas. The remaining regions had less than 15 percent LEP students; eight had less than 10 percent LEP students.

Figure 3 on page 23 shows the most common pattern of special language services for each region. Every region had students in all five of the special language program pattern groups – bilingual education, ESL, bilingual education to ESL, mix of services, and no services. The most common pattern of special language services represented more students than any other pattern in that region. However, it did not necessarily represent the pattern of special language services received by a majority of LEP students in the region. A bilingual education program sequence was the most common pattern of special language services in seven regions. These included all the regions that share a border with Mexico and all but two of the regions in which LEP students made up more than 18 percent of the student population. The percentage of students in these regions who followed a bilingual education sequence ranged from about one-third of the LEP students in the Corpus Christi, Kilgore, and San Angelo regions to over half of the LEP students in the Edinburg, El Paso, and San Antonio regions.

In the Houston and Richardson/Dallas regions, the bilingual education to ESL sequence was the most common pattern of special language services. These students began instruction in a bilingual education program and later move into an ESL program. Both regions include major urban areas, and both had highly diverse student populations and relatively large percentages of LEP students. Hispanic students made up less than one-third of the total student populations in 1992-93, and both regions had similar numbers of Hispanic and African American students. Over 80 percent of the LEP students entering first grade in 1992-93 in both regions spoke Spanish. However, teacher shortages may have been a factor in the types of special language services offered. Bilingual education/ESL has been identified as a teacher shortage area in Texas for a number of years.

An ESL sequence was the most common pattern of special language services in eight regions, including most of the regions with smaller concentrations of LEP students. (In the Kilgore region, equal numbers of students were served in bilingual education sequences and ESL sequences.) Districts with fewer than 20 LEP students in the same grade who speak the same language are not required to offer bilingual education programs but must offer ESL programs. In the Mt. Pleasant and Fort Worth regions, the most common pattern of special language services was for students to receive some other mix of bilingual education and ESL instruction.

(Continued from page 21)

Retained students were more likely to be served in bilingual education to ESL sequences or to receive a mix of services.

Geography. There were regional variations in the types of special language programs offered to LEP students. Texas school districts vary by geographic region in the number and percentage of LEP students in the student population and in the home languages of LEP students. These factors alone would result in variations in the types of special language programs offered and the extent to which they are offered. However, other factors, such as bilingual and ESL teacher shortages, may also vary from region to region and would affect the types of special language programs districts offer.

The following factors are not reflected in the data presented in this paper but may be important in determining the patterns of special language services students receive.

District characteristics. Patterns of special language services that students receive may depend, in part, on district and campus characteristics. The Texas Successful Schools Study (TEA, 2001) uses the effective school correlates as a model and addresses how the seven correlates are applied in schools that are successful in educating students with limited English proficiency. The seven effective schools correlates are: clear school mission, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of student progress, opportunity to learn and student time on task, safe and orderly environment, and home and school relations. Official district policies and informal practices, school climate, degree of community involvement, community expectations, and availability and allocation of resources may influence the types of special language programs that are offered, quality of staff assigned to those programs, and coordination of special language programs with other services such as special education and programs for gifted and talented students.

Program goals. Texas law defines two types of special language programs – bilingual education and ESL. Within these two types there is much variation. For example, all students in bilingual education programs receive instruction in their home language. However, the goal of transitional bilingual education programs is to develop English proficiency. In maintenance bilingual education programs, on the other hand, the goal is not only to develop English proficiency, but also to develop academic proficiency in the native language. As would be expected given the program goals, students in transitional bilingual education programs typically exit the special language programs earlier than students in maintenance bilingual education programs.

Progress Toward Graduation

In addition to looking back at the patterns of special language services the LEP students in the 1992-93 cohort received in elementary and middle school, this study looked forward to progress of students toward passing the exit-level test required for graduation. Most of the students in the study cohort (87%) were in Grade 8 in 1999-00. Test participation and performance at Grade 8 are early indicators of whether a student is making sufficient progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement. The exit-level TAAS tests are similar in length and content to the Grade 8 tests, which have been shown to be one of the best predictors of student performance on the exit-level tests (TEA, 2000).

The analysis of progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement was based on all students in the study cohort, not just those who took the Grade 8 TAAS in 1999-00. This includes retained students who took the Grade 7 or Grade 6 TAAS in 1999-00, LEP students who were tested on TAAS but had not yet exited the special language programs, and recent immigrants who were exempted from the TAAS by the LPAC based on limited English proficiency. All students were included in the analysis because the exit-level test is a graduation requirement for all students, with the one exception of students with disabilities exempted from the exit-level test by the ARD.

There were gaps between the LEP and non-LEP students in the study cohort in progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement. A smaller percentage of LEP students took and passed the TAAS in 1999-00, compared to

non-LEP students. Differences between the LEP and non-LEP students in progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement can be attributed to several factors. Recent immigrants to the United States who were exempted from the exit-level test by the LPAC represented 7 percent of the LEP students in the study cohort. These students entered the Texas public school system with limited English proficiency in middle school and have a relatively short time to develop proficiency in English and master the curriculum content required for successful performance on the exit-level test. Those LEP students who did take the TAAS included students who had not yet exited the special language programs. Students who were still in bilingual education and ESL programs did not perform as well on the TAAS as students who had exited those programs, as might be expected. It was noted earlier that LEP students in the study cohort were retained in grade at higher rates than non-LEP students. Among both LEP and non-LEP students, retained students who were taking the Grade 7 or Grade 6 TAAS in 1999-00 did not perform as well as the Grade 8 students in the study cohort.

The gaps between LEP and non-LEP students in progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement were not as great when comparisons were made between students who are economically disadvantaged. Most LEP students are economically disadvantaged and performance differences between LEP and non-LEP students reflected, in part, performance differences between economically disadvantaged students and students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Among LEP students, there were also performance differences between the five special language program pattern groups. Students served in bilingual education program sequences were making better progress toward meeting the exit-level testing requirement than students in the other special language program pattern groups. These differences reflect, in part, differences between the groups in the average number of years students were enrolled in Texas public schools and in the percentage of students who had exited the special language programs by 1999-00. Because the analysis included students who had not yet exited the special language programs, it cannot be used as a measure of the relative effectiveness of the different types of programs.

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